2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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peacemaker arrives in time a serious disturbance can usually be avoided.

The accounts given in subsequent chapters of blood-feuds, inter-village fights, and other crimes of violence should not, however, cause the reader to pass too harsh a judgment on the Egyptian peasants if he will but bear in mind that the violent contrasts in the physical features of the country are reflected in the psychology of the inhabitants collectively and individually.

The *fellāḥīn* form the bulk of the population of Egypt, and the

FIG. 4. A VILLAGE ON THE BANKS OF THE BAḤR EL-YŪSUF

larger number of them are Muslims. The Copts, who at one time were far more numerous than they are at the present day, are scattered about all over the country, though in a few towns and villages they may form the greater part of the population. The word 'Copt,' it must be borne in mind, does not denote a racial, but rather a religious, distinction.

The Beduins (Arabic *Bedu*, singular *Bedawī*), many of whom still lead a more or less nomadic desert life, and the Arabs, who have settled down as cultivators of the soil, also form a not inconsiderable portion of the population. Their facial features and certain styles of dress distinguish them from the native inhabitants. Nubians, Sudan negroes, Turks, Greeks, Syrians, and Jews are also to be found in large numbers, the four latter peoples chiefly in Lower Egypt, though they do not altogether confine themselves

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

563 to the northern part of the country. Europeans of various nationalities have for many years past settled in Egypt, most of them being engaged in business connected with the production and sale of cotton, sugar, and the like.

361 137 The villages of Egypt (see Fig. 4), as seen from the railway-carriage or from points of vantage in the cultivation, present a most picturesque appearance. They are generally surrounded with palm-groves, often very extensive, while palm-trees also grow actually among the houses, affording a welcome shelter from the

[343]

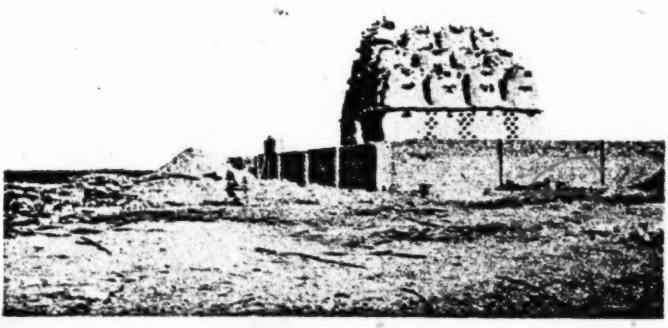

FIG. 5. A PIGEON-HOUSE

heat. These palm-girt villages are dotted about all over the cultivation, the brilliant green of which presents a startling con-
[133] trast to the immediately adjacent, and seemingly endless, desert. Sometimes a village encroaches right on to the edge of the desert, the upper slopes of which tower above it, forming a most romantic background. During the period of inundation the villages, which
[132] stand on a somewhat higher level than the surrounding cultivation, appear like palm-encircled islands in a vast inland sea, a geographical feature also remarked upon by Herodotus.[1]

343 231 Pigeon-houses (see Fig. 5) are prominent architectural features in a village. They are sometimes in the form of towers, with sloping, white-washed mud walls, surmounted by several layers of large pottery jars placed side by side in rows. Every jar has a hole in the base, for the ingress and egress of the pigeons. Some-

[1] ii, 97.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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323 handles to the vessel. The pots were then sun-baked before being placed in the kiln.

It is interesting to observe that there are three distinct stages in the manufacture of the single vessel, and to note that a man again takes his share in the hand-making process. I should mention that, owing to the skill of the potter, these jars, though almost entirely hand-made, are quite symmetrical.

The method of shaping the first part of a vessel in a carefully

[291]
[413]
[137]

FIG. 67. DRAWING UP THE SIDES OF A POT

prepared hollow in the ground, as described above, is common in many parts of Egypt.

323 563 As a rule the Arabs do not make pottery, but rely on the Egyptian *fellāḥīn* for the pots they may require. So far there is only one place where I have found this industry among the Arabs, and I came across it quite accidentally. I was staying in a locality in Middle Egypt where Arabs have been settled for several generations, and in one of their villages, situated close to the desert, I found an old man engaged in the manufacture of the large jars (*balālīṣ*, singular *ballāṣ*) in which women carry water to their houses. In that part of Egypt the *ballāṣ* is globular in shape. I visited the old man's 'factory' and found him hard at work. He

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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had his supply of clay, mixed with chaff, ready prepared inside a hovel, and carefully covered with sacking to prevent evaporation. A potter's wheel also stood inside. The prepared hollow was just outside the hut, and it was made there to enable me to take photographs of him at his work; he usually had one inside, where there was not sufficient light for photography. The hollow was circular and shallow, and was lined with chopped straw well beaten into

FIG. 68. FORMING THE RIM WITH THE AID OF THE WHEEL

the ground, until the surface was smooth and firm. The potter took a large piece of clay, which he formed into a cone shape by rolling it in the hollow (Fig. 69). He then took the implement made of hard baked clay and began to hollow out the cone of clay from the thick end into a thick, shallow bowl. Laying aside the clay implement, the potter now began to draw up the sides of the vessel with his left hand and the wooden implement, in the manner described above (Fig. 70). This process was continued until a large globular water-jar was formed. The somewhat small circular opening was carefully nipped into shape with the fingers and thumb, and then the jar was put in the sun to dry and harden for some hours before the rim was added on the wheel (Fig. 71). It

[Text continues on p. 145]

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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516
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FIG. 69. THE ARAB POTTER WITH CONE-SHAPED LUMP OF CLAY

FIG. 70. THE WATER-JAR NEARING COMPLETION

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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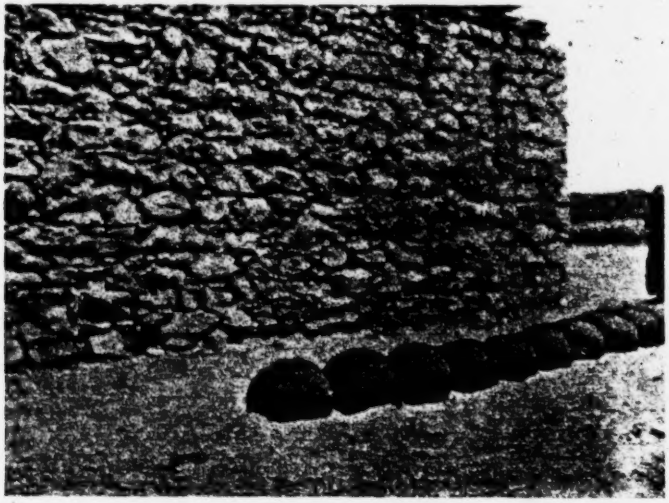
should be noted that in this case the pot was not taken out of the hollow in the ground until it was ready for sun-baking. 323 563

Similar jars are made by another family of potters in this Arab village, where the women assist their menfolk by preparing the clay for use. The method employed in the manufacture of these jars is the same as that just described.

Much farther south I saw a somewhat different method. The pots, which are of various shapes and sizes, are not only all entirely 323 189



[415]

FIG. 71. WATER-JARS SUN-BAKING

wheel-turned, but the material of which they are made differs from that used farther north; also, the vessels are covered with a slip and painted with simple designs. [531]

The pots are made of *ḥamr* (a reddish clay), which is brought in large lumps from the adjacent desert. These are broken up, soaked in water, and then kneaded into a clay of the right consistency. No chopped straw is mixed with it. After the pots have been turned on the wheel (Fig. 72) they are placed on hard clay disks to sun-bake for half a day, and during this period they are tilted slightly from time to time, so that the air may circulate underneath. This is done so as to ensure an even evaporation of the superfluous moisture from all parts of 323 [317]

E
F
369 In a diversity so inorganic the various groups meet or overlap without real relationship or interpenetration, without even real knowledge of one another. The townspeople of Cairo and Alexandria know the countryside only by glimpses
F caught through a train or car window. The fellaheen,
[622 shut in by their fields and villages, know nothing of the city
563] except through the *'omda*, the Greek grocer, or the landlord's
443] agent.

Even in Cairo or Alexandria, where the aristocracy of Egypt is gathered together, the various groups only touch at their edges. Each lives in its own way, and is self-sufficient. Each has its own mentality, and its own 'Egypt'.

E
F
369 On the one hand there are the Egyptian groups. These
423 may be either Copts or Moslems. The sphere of the great landowners is not the same as that of Government officials. The clerical *milieu* of Al-Azhar is worlds away from the lay society of the Egyptian University. At receptions and festivities there are still only men present. Women have their own distinct groups. There is also the Palace, and the
E separate circle of the Princes.
563 Then there are the foreign communities. These are certainly Egyptianised to some extent, but this is their only point in common. Each has its own clearly defined characteristics. The Syrians are active business men. The Jews are influential financiers. The English keep their distance at the Turf Club. The French and Belgians are concerned with the big companies — the Gas, and Water Companies, the *Crédit Foncier* (11), the Sugar Refineries, the Suez Canal — and the Italians are in building and commerce. The Greeks, who are more numerous, come closer to the masses of the people.

All these, which are essentially urban groups with their own characteristics and their own capital, act as a kind of leaven in the economy, finance and politics of Egypt. They are not a leaven to its people, for they never even mix with Egyptian society, and their progress leaves the fellaheen unmoved. Only from the outside and at a distance, through numerous intermediaries, do they knead the masses and take
E from them what they have to give.
F
421 The source of Egypt's wealth is the soil, and what it
134 yields to the fellah's labours. But we must examine first of all the ownership of this soil. The whole structure of an agricultural country is built on its law of property.

consist of a red, pink or varicoloured petticoat and wide coloured drawers. The *fellaha* does her own rather clumsy sewing, but the cloth is bought. 291

The cotton stuffs, calicos and other fabrics used for the fellah's clothing come mostly from Japan, Italy and India. Imports from other countries are becoming more and more insignificant as the Egyptian weaving industry develops. The indigo or black dyes are produced in the country, and all the clothes are made up in Egypt. *Gallabiyas* and dresses are made to measure; shirts, drawers, waistcoats and caps are ready-made. Jewish commission agents often undertake to supply the big villages with the necessary quantities of material or ready-made clothes. The goods are sold just before the big feasts. The old wool-spinners and local weavers provide only a small part of the total supply (41). [439] 288 386 563 292 294 286

The dullness of the women's attire is relieved by striking ornaments. Round the neck they wear strings of big yellow or blue beads; on their wrists a number of bracelets made, according to wealth or fancy, of glass, silver or even gold; on their ankles the *kholkhal*, a massive anklet of bronze, silver or gold, which takes the place of our wedding ring and must always be worn by a married woman. Everything else may be sold, but not this. If there is a bereavement in the family a woman lays aside her ear-rings, necklaces, and bracelets; the *kholkhal* she takes off only on the death of her lord and master. The women never wear socks or stockings, but sometimes use sandals or slippers like the men. 301 [765] 291

This strikingly simple clothing betokens an old civilisation and a supple adaptability to climate and practical needs. The fellah's loose, simple clothes permit him to breathe easily and to move freely. They keep the outlines of the human form in harmony with the countryside. On the other hand, they are dark-coloured and hot — the head-dress and the women's clothes at least — so that they absorb the sun's heat instead of reflecting it. Their excessive length hinders walking and stirs up the dust. However, the advantages outnumber the disadvantages, and the habits which have retained such a costume so long unchanged show a deep-rooted wisdom.

231
343 in bigger villages the house of a notable or a successful merchant.

251 Within easy reach of the village on the side facing the
343 fields are the *shoonas* or depôts for storing crops, together with offices and officials' houses, and the *ilzamiya* or compulsory school.

344 Now let us go inside the village. In a clean and access-
485 ible corner, better cared for than all the other houses, there may be sometimes a "rest-house" or *madyafa* of two or three rooms, kept by the *omda* for the use of Government officials and travellers. This building belongs either to the Irrigation Department or to the Ministry of the Interior. There are Government rest-houses in about 400 villages.

361 Let us penetrate to the heart of the little town. What
363 we have seen up to now has given us no idea of what to expect. All is dust and disorder. There is no plan or system, and not a single straight line. The only thing in common with a modern city is the congestion due to lack of building space. The alleys, strewn with dung and rubbish, are so narrow that three people cannot walk abreast; they are less than two yards wide. There is no hope of driving through, and hardly of riding through on donkey-back. However, in some places where there is more movement, the buildings are of necessity less crowded, as in front of the *omda's*
[346 house or the school, and in the business quarter, which
366] contains the little open shops of the tailor, the grocer, the potter, and the weaver, and, if the village is large enough, a café. There are many villages without a single shop, so that it is impossible to buy anything at all, except from an
[443] occasional pedlar. In some villages the system of barter is still in use, corn, for example, being exchanged for salt.

491 No main road ever goes through a village as in England
363 or France. The hamlet is a compact mass of buildings,
361 standing aside from the road, canal or river; wheeled vehicles cannot enter it. That is why so few foreigners, missionaries and, indeed, well-to-do Egyptians except the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, know anything of its inner life. To get a picture of
622 this, we must first describe the leading characters.
647 We have already met the *'omda* and the *sarraf*, who link the fellah to the Government, and the *nazir*, his link with the
443 landowner. Another connection with the civilised world is
563 provided by the *baqqal*, often a Greek, who performs the

functions of grocer and druggist, café-keeper and innkeeper, money-lender and banker. He is the most Egyptianised of Europeans. He has no objection to living right in the village, among the fellaheen if not with them, and on them if not for them. He has brought into this closed world the gramophone and the games of the West. He robs the fellaheen and teaches them the use of narcotics, but he is unfailingly obliging. Though his rates are exorbitant, he will lend money on request without asking too many questions. He sells on credit, and when he buys he pays cash. The fellaheen appreciate his resourcefulness and enterprise.

Other less important but more popular figures stand out from the mass by virtue of some well-defined social functions long sanctified by custom.

First comes the *mizayen* or barber-surgeon. He is a very busy man. He shaves all the fellaheen of his district once a month, and crops their hair. Squatting in front of his client, who also squats, he takes a dish of water between his knees, and an old razor between finger and thumb, and quickly tidies up the face and head. An aching tooth? He will pull it out. Cupping, scarification, purge? No difficulty at all. He is responsible for public health, and therefore performs vaccinations, and notifies deaths to the *'omda*. The *mizayen* also officiates at circumcisions, and on the eve of this operation, or of a wedding, the hair-cutting takes on something of a ritual significance. He surrounds it with ceremony, and in so doing dignifies his art. For his varied services he is paid either in kind at harvest time or in milliemes.

The magician or sorcerer, with his charms, his formulae, his perfumed sachets and his magic remedies, would be a serious rival to the *mizayen*, were it not that his credulous customers are chiefly women. He may live in the village or merely pass through. It is to him that the country women have recourse in order to get the help of jinns, to cast spells, to counteract the evil eye or to ensure conception. No-one can make them believe that this holy man is just a rascal and an impostor. The more magic babble he puts into his rites, the more confidence they place in him. Indeed there are many instances in which trickery is not a sufficient explanation for the effects produced. A whole book might be written on witchcraft in the village, and its affinity

F 113

See E.W. Lane : MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE MODERN EGYPTIANS : Everyman Library,

F [192] 63a. *T.*—There seems no justification for connecting the Arabic BIF with the French RIVE.

64. In the United States, however, for example in Tennessee, cotton carnivals take place. In the town of Memphis exhibitions and processions with carts are organised for four days in May. The first festival took place in 1931, and very soon the carnival became an extremely popular holiday.

F [527 171]

See J. Taylor : TENNESSEE TABLEAUX, in THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for May 1939.

65. Winifred Blackman : THE FELLAHIN OF UPPER EGYPT : Harrap, 1927.

66. *T.*—Retranslated from the French, which gives no reference.

67. Muhammad El-Kolaly : ESSAI SUR LES CAUSES DE LA CRIMINALITÉ EN EGYPTE : Librairie de Droit et de Jurisprudence, Paris, 1939.

F [563 443 186] 68. KHAWAGA is the usual term for a Christian merchant, generally a Greek, but in Upper Egypt often a Copt. In Cairo and Lower Egypt it is the usual word for a European. Its use implies a certain respect, and even servility.

C F [175 346] 69. *T.*—The early hermits of the Egyptian deserts were first assembled into monastic communities by St. Pachomius about 320 A.D. near the existing village of Faw, just south-west of Nag' Hammadi in Upper Egypt. There are some remains of a church, which was probably founded by him. His name, in the form BAKHOUM, is still very common in Coptic families.

See A.J.B. in THE ANCIENT COPTIC CHURCHES OF EGYPT.

70. REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMISSION ON THE DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1941-2.

71. Speech in the Chamber of Deputies, December 1939.

F 191 72. *T.*—Egyptian colloquial Arabic is as far from the language of the Koran as Italian is from Latin. In theory the written style of modern Arabic is Koranic,

his having divulged the secret to me that in two days after this, the disease returned to him through imagination, just as it had left him under the same influence.

XXXII

"NECK PAIN" (WAG' AL-RAḲABA)

THIS means either hoarseness of the throat or diseases of the tonsils (lōzatēn). The "old wives" "cure" it in two ways. (1) They make the patient hang round his neck a huge bead of red stones, and (2) they order him to swallow a boiled hen's egg at one gulp without chewing. The harm of this latter method will appear from the story reported by the Egyptian newspapers of date 13th November, 1892, about a youth in the Daḳahlīya [Province] in whose throat the egg stuck and he died shortly after. Perhaps this will be a warning to those who are heedless and restrain them from trusting in the nonsense of the "old wives" and the absurdities of foolish individuals.

XXXIII

WORM EXTRACTORS (DAWWĀDA)

THESE are a community—the Ghagar and Nawar[1]—whose origin is from Syria; some say from China; and some go so far as to say that they are spread all over the world. They claim that they can "cure" children who cry too much, by extracting the worms (*dīd*) from their foreheads, pretending that this is the cause of their continual crying. Dr. Muḥammad Efendī 'Alī Duwaidār relates that a little child of his family was always crying, so the child's parents summoned

[1] [Gypsies and vagrants. See *Encyclopedia of Islam*, under, *Nūrī*. Tr.]

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

the *Dawwād* (" *worm-extractor* ") to " cure " him. These are his words: Whilst I was in the dwelling, this man arrived, and I wished to witness his " operation " myself, only that, before he should direct his attention to the child, according to his wont, I directed my attention to what was in his hand before the beginning of the " operation." I found in it a quantity of cheese worms. When he felt that his trickery was exposed and that he was openly disgraced, he sought safety in flight."[1]

XXXIV

WORMS IN THE EYE (DŪD AL-'AIN)

ANOTHER crowd of quacks extract worms from the eye. Most of these worm-extractors are women to whom silly creatures come complaining of cracking of the eye and heaviness of the eyelid. They have already a confused idea that the pain they feel is due to " worms in the eye," whereas in most cases it is nothing but granular ophthalmia.[2] The " operation " is as follows: The " doctress " in spite of the patient's dislike, brings a piece of sugar and, turning back the eyelid of the poor creature, rubs the inside with it, until the fleshy part becomes rubbed away and sticks to the sugar, assuming the appearance of worms.

There is no concealing the dangers of this " operation "; one being the sticking of the eyelids to the ball of the eye. Many women have lost their sight by this ineffective treatment. Perhaps the harm and injury which overtook them may be a warning and admonition to others, so that no one will consent to the absurdities of such imposters.

We counsel people not to accept the " treatment " of the Ghagar [Gypsies] nor to pay attention to their judgments and

[1] [A photographic illustration of such a " cure " will be found in Miss Blackman, *op. cit.*, p. 212. Tr.]

[2] [Trachoma, Arabice, *ramad ḥubūbī* (sic). Dr. Sharaf gives *ḥabībī*. Tr.]

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9

F 563 759

counsels. And they are not to be deceived by the fact that certain men of science in Europe have recently arisen in support of the methods of "curing" possessed by the Ghagar and by the "old wives." It will not be long before they reverse their opinion.

XXXV

THE FARGĀN (TRIBE) AND HYDROPHOBIA (KALAB)

L 831 169

It is well-known that the Bedouin and Arabs who dwell in the deserts and wildernesses, are harmed by their employing dogs as protectors and friends, and making them serve as guardians and watchers over their lives and possessions. Because of the wide-spread use of these animals amongst them, the chances of being bitten by them have increased. They "cure" such by means of cauterization with a heated iron, whether the person be afflicted with real hydrophobia or not, as is often the case.

L 759 759

It is firmly rooted in popular belief to-day that there is no escape from the evil consequences of a bite except "treatment" by this method at the hand of the *Fargān*, a small group of the Aulād 'Alī tribe,[1] who call themselves Marabouts (*murābiṭīn*). You see those who are bitten by dogs going repeatedly unto them, and seeking them out from all parts of the country and the farthest horizons, to obtain healing and relief from the distress of the disease. As for the above-mentioned "method," it consists of heating a piece of iron in the fire until it reaches the stage of being red-hot. Then the *Fargān* take it and severely burn the wound with it. And one of the observations which the patient must follow is to remain in a darkened room for the space of fifty days, during which he must not approach his wife. Otherwise the benefit [p. 71] expected from the "treatment" ceases.

[1] [Desert Arabs. See P. Kahle: *Die Aulad-'Ali-Bedouinen der Libyschen Wüste*, in *Der Islam*, IV (1913), pp. 355–386. Tr.]

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

power is given to him he imposes on simpletons by various tricks until he steals whatever they possess. You even see him in a court of justice looking innocent and pitied by men just because of his influence over them.

The evil magnetic electricity, which we name *envy*, directs itself by way of man's senses. And as it effects the sense of sight, so also sometimes touch, smell and hearing.

One of my acquaintances said to me that the *Fakīh*[1] of their village was "envying" children by staring at them, and whenever the envier directed his gaze upon the envied one in the moment of excitement his poison affected that current and weakened the life movement in animals and plants, and they were wasted and lost. And in proportion to the power of the envier in overcoming the power of the envied, so is the strength or weakness of the danger, and there results a slight or a severe illness, or death, or the snapping of trees, or the destruction of lofty palaces.

A reliable person has related that there was a man, named al-Safti, in the village of Dafrawi in the Province of Buhaira, twenty years ago, who was an evil-doer. The people of that district knew this. One of his atrocities was that when he was sitting with a company of evil companions, one day, in front of his house, there passed by him a number of Gypsies (*Ghagar*) driving camels to market. He bargained with them for a camel, but they did not accept the price which it was worth to them. Then one of his companions said to him, "Woe to thee, O Ṣaftī! Allow us to eat of its flesh just now!" So he shook his head (in assent) and overtook the merchants and seized the camel's head-rope, and said, while he was intently looking at it, "Oh, you fat camel!" [p. 96.] Then the narrator swears that the camel did not move from its place but fell to the ground, and they slaughtered it. But (he says) the strange fact was that its flesh was tasteless and blueish in colour.

A friend told me that two men skilled in envy (*ḥasad*) and renowned for it were feared by the people. One day one of these two went to visit his friend (the other envier) and found him ploughing the land with two large oxen. So he looked

[1] [See footnote above, p. 40.]

8;Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

60.

Dogs of Arabs.

Everywhere on the margin of the Nile valley, are to be found Arab families, who, with their low, brown tents and a little live stock, shift north or south according to the season of the year. Their bristly, barking dogs are not particularly friendly animals. Moreover, perhaps even the Arabs themselves are here designated by the term, "dogs".

Ma 'ultē-lak, ya 'Ali?:
Baddar bina, baddar!
aḥsan kilāb el-'arab fuṭ-ṭur' bithabbar.
Win habbarūk, ya 'Ali,
maktūb u-m'addar.

Did I not tell thee so, 'Ali?
"Let us make an early start, an early start!
Else the Arabs' dogs will attack thee on the streets.
But if they should fall upon thee, 'Ali,
Then it is thus written and decreed."

2—5 contain a former warning, which is again given 'Ali. He laughed at it and they did not start until lat.r. Then he actually suffered harm at the hands of the Arabs.

5 In the book of fate, according to the fatalistic doctrine held by the Moslems.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

82.

The Daughter of the Great.

X 539
● 563 In many villages there live, besides the fellāḥs, Arabs who have become settled. Inspite of the fact that they are, for the most part, not to be distinguished from the fellāḥs in their mode of living and often not even in their dress, yet the Arabs are very proud of their extraction. They are [576] pleased to be addressed thus: Ja šēḫ el-ʿarab = "Shēkh of the Arabs".

Bint el-akabir mālya ʾulletha.
taḥt es-selālim šaḫšaḫit libbetha.
šāwirtē ʿaʾli bil-ḥuṣān amsikha.
ʿamalit amīre, bintē šēḫ el-ʿorbān.

The daughter of the great filled her water-bottle;
[301] Under the stairway her necklace jingled.
I wanted to take her on my horse
But she held herself proudly, as a woman of rank and daughter of the Shēkh of the Arabs.

[342] [312] 2. The stairway ascends on the outside of the house, and beneath it, in its shade, stands the large water-jar (zīr), in which the day's provision of water is kept.